

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

January 24, 2008

The Willmar City Council met in work session at 4:50 p.m., Thursday, January 24, 2008, in Conference Room No. 2 at the City Office Building.

Members present included Mayor Les Heitke and Council Members Denis Anderson, Doug Reese, Steve Gardner, Bruce DeBlieck, Cindy Swenson, Rick Fagerlie, Jim Dokken and Ron Christianson. Others present included City Administrator Michael Schmit, Public Works Director Mel Odens, Assistant Engineer Holly Wilson, Finance Director Steve Okins, and West Central Tribune Reporter David Little.

Mayor Heitke opened the meeting and briefly explained that the purpose of the work session was to discuss storm water issues within the City. It was noted that a major emphasis would be placed on financing options for short and long-range improvements given the Council's recent decision to not use a gas franchise fee as its major financing tool. Council Member Dokken offered suggestions and asked Staff to develop initial funding source of \$250,000 for 2008 storm water improvements and that if needed, said funding be provided through the use of reserve funds. Mr. Dokken's proposal also included suggestions for excavation of various areas in the southeast portion of the City and the 26 acres of Municipal Utility owned land in the south/southwest portion of the City to provide for additional storm water storage and/or detention. Council Member Gardner offered solutions including the establishment of a City-wide rain garden program working in conjunction with a matching fund program through Soil and Water Conservation District Office. The immediate focus of a rain garden program would be in neighborhoods experiencing flooding issues as a result of large rainfall incidences. Mr. Gardner's proposal included working with the Hawk Creek Watershed District's projects and a review of the City's Storm Water Ordinance focusing on increased standards for storm water retention/detention in any new residential or commercial developments. Numbers other financing mechanisms were suggested including the use of storm water special assessment districts targeting problem areas.

Staff informed the Mayor and Council Members that some changes were to be expected in the proposed 2008 improvement program allowing development of storm water detention areas and related improvements at the Garfield School site and West Trott Avenue as part of a two-year program, which will provide for improvements in the 10th and Kandiyohi area and surrounding neighborhoods. It was agreed that discussions of the various financing mechanisms would continue on a regular basis at the Council's committee level.

The work session adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Schmit,
City Administrator